Police Subcommittee four year progress report:
October 2009

In 2007 Mayor Otis Johnson's Police Committee was asked by the Savannah Chatham Metropolitan Police Department's, (SCMPD), Chief Berkow to return and re-examine the SCMPD. What follows are our observations, made in 2008 and 2009.

Background:
In May of 2004 Savannah Mayor Otis Johnson created the Police Subcommittee as part of the larger Public Safety Task Force.   The police committee was asked to investigate the SCMPD and its supporting institutions "to develop and recommend programs to reduce crime". The Committee spent 2004 riding and visiting with police officers. In May of 2005 we submitted a report detailing our observations and recommendations on how the department might improve its effectiveness. (Original report can be found at: www.jrrobertssecurity.com)

In November of 2006 a new Police Chief, Chief Michael Berkow, was hired. He noticed that one recommendation in the Police Committee's report was, "…to appoint a group to return to review the progress made by the city and the SCMPD in their efforts to reduce crime and assure the citizens that they live in a safe community." Chief Berkow asked the previous committee to return and examine the department and comment on the changes he was in the process of implementing. Mayor Johnson agreed. This is the result of that request:

SCMPD in 2004 -- summary of the original report findings:

 In 2004 we found a department with a centralized command and control management structure. Resources, decisions and most importantly information were kept at headquarters. Officers were compartmentalized – separated into precincts, and specialized units. There was minimal information sharing up or down the chain of command or coordination across units. Due to the very limited information provided officers, this essentially resulted in "dumb policing". Officers were kept in the dark and so could do little on their own. As a result the SCMPD was reactionary – reacting to problems as they arose. It had little ability to get ahead of issues, or clear responsibility for safety in any given area.

Headquarters believed crime fighting was the job of specialized units. These county wide ranging units had little coordination with those that best knew a neighborhood, patrol, or the neighborhood it's self. This reliance on special units has been criticized as "stranger policing" that undermines the effectiveness of precincts. (See original report.)

Police precincts and their patrol units were deemed less important than special units and so were kept chronically understaffed. On average we found a shortage of about 60 officers across the 6 precincts. The result was undermanned patrols that could barely scramble to keep up with 911 calls. Worse, much of the staffing they did have was officers working overtime. This resulted in two problems, first, officers could be exhausted and so less effective, and second, they could only work a half shift. This meant a patrol that started out understaffed would end up with barely a skeleton shift as overtime officers left mid shift.

Precincts and their patrol officers were given little authority or resources, and certainly no time, to proactively combat crime – to prevent crime before it happens. More importantly, they had little motivation to be proactive. They were not held responsible for what happened their precinct, nor was any other unit. The buck stopped nowhere.

In summary the previous department was poorly organized and struggling to just react to crimes as they occurred. There was little accountability. Morale was low and turnover high.

Current general Observations:

The central thrust of the committee's 2005 recommendations was to, "Push resources down to those closest to problems – the precincts – and hold them strictly accountable", and to re-emphasis police basics, patrol. We recommended that precincts be better staffed – that officers be assigned defined neighborhoods and then held responsible for all crime that happened in their area. We believed that the primary emphasis should be on patrol officers and precincts with special units structured to support them.

We have witnessed significant progress under the new police chief. The SCMPD has completely reworked its organizational structure. Operationally they have essentially gone from one centralized police force to the equivalent of 5 mini coordinated police departments supported and held accountable by headquarters.

Precincts are now fully staffed. Each precinct has been given the personnel, resources and discretion to operate independently. With the additional manpower has come more responsibility. Precincts are now accountable for what goes on in their area, on their "turf".

Furthering this reorganization, technology is being used to push information down the chain of command and across disciplines making for "smart" coordinated policing. Intelligence is both more available and shared between units. The result is quicker, more multifaceted responses to problems as they appear. Supervisors are now more visible on the street, not back at HQ or in precinct house. They are where they can be most effective, and best understand our problems. This attitude extends to the chief's office.

Our 2005 report suggested 8 broad areas and ideas for improvement. Following are these same 8 headline suggestions with our comments on how the SCMPD under Chief Berkow responded:

1. City, County and Police set aggressive crime reduction goals:

In 2004 there was a goal to reduce crime by 5%. However department wide we saw no real indication that this minimal goal was communicated effectively or that there was any urgency to meet it.

Compstat is a system imported from the New York City Police department. When used correctly, it's a way to communicate and get and the entire department, from the chief to patrol officers, "on the same page". At its heart are weekly meetings with detailed crime statistics so that all concerned can know what is happening and those fighting crime are held accountable for their success and failures. Central to its success is that lessons learned are quickly translated into improved methods of operation.

To be effective, information must flow both ways. Headquarters must hear and understand the problems confronting those on the street to make sure they have the correct leadership, resources and tactics. Likewise headquarters must have up to date specific crime data so that those on the street can be held accountable for what happen on their beat.

> "The [Compstat] paradigm emphasizes accountability and discretion at all levels of the organization, strategic and time-sensitive identification and response to management problems (not only crime, disorder and quality of life, but also internal management issues); capitalization of the expertise and input of all personnel, both inside and outside the organization; and continuous organizational restructuring or re-engineering to remove impediments to high performance."
> Chief Bratton in "The Compstat Paradigm."

In 2005 we attended a Compstat meeting where precinct captains gave perfunctory reports on their areas of operation, everyone got "attaboys" and left. They were clearly not a venue for frank discussion or the exchange of critical information. As an example, captains repeatedly complained to committee members about their being significantly short staffed. Two Captains were asked why they didn't bring this up at Compstat meetings. They laughed at the silliness of the question. That was just not done. Compstat was not being used as intended.

Now weekly Compstat meeting are much larger, more freewheeling, and goal driven. Crime reduction targets are clearly communicated and importantly, followed up. Graphs are shown with weekly crime stats from each precinct with a goal of a 15% total crime reduction overlaid. Every precinct can see how they did meeting their goal that week and how well they are progressing toward their annual target.

Officers are encouraged to participate with the good and the bad. The chief leads the meetings grilling precinct captains, unit heads and supporting officers on the details behind the last week's crime stats, and what is being done to resolve them. They are asked in detail about specific incidents and problems -- have they been solved, and if not, what is being done to resolve them.

Banner on the wall at May 2008 Compstat meeting.

1. What is working? Why?
2. What is not working? Why?
3. If it's not working, how do we fix it?   Or should we fix it?
4. What new strategies should be implemented?

These are no longer quiet formal presentations. They are working meetings were information is exchanged to fix problems. When asked when a meeting would end an officer responded, "When we're done".

As an example at one Compstat meeting a captain was questioned about a problem of illegal prescription drugs sales in his precinct. He noted they were having trouble getting cooperation from the community as they were afraid of a small group who were probably the ones also doing selling. For the next 20 munities they discussed both how to track down those selling the drugs and how to deal with the community's fear. This was deemed a problem in its own right. They discussed how to alter their patrols and what other department assets might be brought in to alleviate the neighborhood's concerns. The fact residents were fearful was viewed as a significant problem in its own right.

Compstat meetings now instill an urgency to confront crime with a rapid and thorough response. Most importantly, it is a way to continually review the effectiveness of units and officers. This forces all concerned to be accountable and allows the department to be dynamic and adapt as conditions on our streets change.

2. Implement organization-wide reforms to enhance police effeteness:

This section of the original report contained a list of organizational reforms the committee thought would increase the SCMPD's ability to fight crime. The SCMPD has made numerous changes. Following are comments on a few:

Leadership:
In 2004 we noticed a culture of senior management operating from headquarters or the precinct buildings. They were not out on the street. The result was a major disconnect between what management believed their offers were doing, and what was actually going on. We recommended that supervisors "lead from the street".

Now all senior managers have Blackberries (See technology below), that notify them immediately of any crime or activity if they are on or off duty. Precincts have been reorganized so they are responsible for what goes on in their area.   (See "Ownership" of crime below.) The result: On a ride along in 2008 it was clear that Sergeants, Lieutenants and Captains were on the street – a big change.

Following is an extreme example of leadership by example:

Savannah-Chatham police received a call about a man being robbed by three teens at gunpoint after he made an ATM withdrawal at the Kroger grocery store at 311 E. Gwinnett St. The teens were spotted near Hubert Middle School, 768 Grant St., and one was arrested, said police spokeswoman Judy Pal.

Another member of the trio took off but was spotted by Savannah-Chatham police Chief Michael Berkow, who pursued the suspect over a 10-foot chain-link fence, Pal said.

Berkow and other officers surrounded the teen in an area thick with weeds. An officer and her K-9 partner, Binky, sniffed out the suspect in a makeshift shelter, she said. Berkow and a sergeant were treated at the scene for cuts to their hands, Pal said.   http://savannahnow.com/node/626492

The Chief is on the street and consequently so are his supervisors. As one officer commented, "If we have a shooting there's a good chance the Chief will be at the scene. No Captain wants to blow off showing up and then find out the Chief was there." Today senior officers are not holed up in their office. The result -- they now have a much better understanding of what is happening on our streets.

Education, training and incentives:
The committee was also concerned about the education of officers and what appeared to be perverse incentives they faced. For example there were disincentives to be physically fit or to have a college education.

In the last 3 years there has been a huge effort to invest in officers and to align incentives with the work desired. Officers with a college degree now have a higher starting salary. A number of steps have been taken to create a "fitness culture" within the department, starting with fitness courses at the police academy to having an in house fitness and nutrition counselor.

A greater emphasis has been placed on recruitment, education and the further advanced training of officers. The department has become more selective. They have aligned the interests of those recruiting potential new officers with those training – they now work together. It used to be that recruiters were looking for bodies with no concern about how well a recruit would ultimately do. Now those training are also doing the recruiting – they have to "eat their own cooking".

The police Academy is where recruits go to become certified Georgia police officers. Chief Berkow attended the academy and found the curriculum out of date. Now many classes at the academy are taught by SCMPD officers. The curriculum has been modernized and made more relevant. There has been a push to initiate cadets into a "fitness culture" at the academy. In prior years there was little physical training required. The SCMPD has changed that -- now PT is a central part of the program.

Continuing education for officers has been re-emphasized. Officers are sent to learn from other departments that are doing innovative policing. Like at the academy, officers have been sent out to learn new disciplines and importantly, learn how to teach them. An example is SCMPD's Critical Incident Training:

> Savannah-Chatham police held critical incident training and opened it to various emergency response units in Chatham County.
>
> They're using a miniaturized version of Savannah to train for a variety of disaster scenarios.
>
> "This is training that we've never had here before. this is training that's going to directly impact our department and it's training that is going to directly impact our community," said training director Gary Taylor.
>
> "Many people think it's what they do every day, but these incidents we look at, the barricaded gunmen, the hazmat scene, the explosion, officers don't have a lot of experience because fortunately they don't occur a lot," said BowMac instructor Vince Faggiano.
>
> They may not occur a lot, but they do occur. This training takes specific aim at getting first responders ready for emergencies like the explosion at Imperial Sugar in 2008.
> http://www.wtoctv.com/Global/story.asp?S=10820651#

By opening this course up to other agencies, such as the fire department and Medstar, (EMS), the SCMPD's increased focus on training will have community wide benefits. The more our first responders train together the better they will work together the next time we experience a tragedy like the explosion at the sugar plant.

A tangible effect of the improved training is our officers have been more disciplined in their use of force. In 2007 there were 8 officer involved shootings. The department responded by creating a program on the proper use of force; "Managing Officer Created Jeopardy". The results are encouraging. In 2008 and so far this year, (end of September), there are been no officer involved shootings.

Continuing this emphasis on training, the SCMPD is currently working on constructing a new training facility to further their ability to invest in the skills of our officers.

Officers will always vote with their feet. It used to be common to lose officers to other departments. This exodus has all but stopped. Better, we've heard antidotes of officers from other departments who have applied to be a part of the SCMPD. The combination of better recruitment, education, and providing officers with the information and ability to use their discretion, (see below), has resulted in dramatically lower turnover. The city and county invests a lot in creating new officers. Now we are holding onto our "investment".

Allocation of officers:
Lastly we were concerned that officers were not necessarily patrolling when and where the crimes were occurring. Part of the reorganization has been to make sure resources match up to problems. Previously shifts and precincts were peopled with little regard to calls for service or criminal activity. Today precincts and shifts have been rebalanced to make sure police resources are where and when the problems are occurring in our community.

Those closest to the problem, precinct Captains, now have the authority and the resources to choose how to staff their area of responsibility. (See every officer a Patrol officer below.) One way they have taken advantage of this authority is to create swing shifts where necessary, ("Delta" and "Echo" shifts), to overlap existing patrols during high demand times. Giving precinct Captains responsibility and flexibility results in officers better deployed where they are most needed.

3. Move resources to the precincts to promote clear "ownership" of crime:

In 2004 responsibility was diffused throughout the department – it was hard to know who was accountable for what. Even more troubling, the department could not tell us how many officers were showing up for work and where they were deployed. We found the 6 precincts were short a total of about 60 officers.

Today headquarters knows exactly who is showing up for work. They maintain a board that shows every employee and their actual assignment that day. Much more importantly, responsibility for resources has been pushed down to those closest to problems – the precincts.

In 2004 we could not get a clear answer from headquarters on who was showing up for work. However, those with front line responsibility, precinct captains, knew to a man, or woman, who showed up on any given day. It mattered desperately to them -- they had to know. This shows why resources are best deployed by those closest to the problem.

Today the entire department has been reorganized around "turf". Officers and units are now responsible for safety in a given area. Precinct captains are now held accountable for what goes on in their precinct via Compstat. In return they have been given more officers and greater control over how they are deployed.   In addition to having a full complement of patrol officers, precincts now have specialized officers that previously worked out of headquarters, such as detectives. Now a precinct can't say, "Don't know what's happening with that, we turned it over to investigation." There is now more coordination and team work to keep our neighborhoods safe.

The process of making officers clearly responsible for specific real estate is ongoing. Currently precincts are being divided into two sectors each having a lieutenant responsible for that area. Each sector lieutenant will then hold sergeants and officers responsible for specific "turf". Ownership of problems will become that much clearer.

Special units have been downsized and their emphasis has been altered. Today they often operate in support of the precincts. For example if a precinct is experiencing a particular problem requiring in-depth surveillance and investigation it can request assistance from TRAP. This way we have specialized skills partnered with those who best know the citizens and neighborhood and who are now responsible for that neighborhoods safety.

By making officers responsible for a given area, and then tracking their ability to keep that area safe with Compstat, we are working towards an accountable police force.

4. Re-emphasize the basics: "Every officer a patrol officer":

Reaffirming the fundamental importance of patrol and the patrol officer is behind much of the department's changes. The old SCMPD kept vacancies at patrol. The message was clear – patrol was a low priority position, good for little more than responding to 911 calls.

The most valuable officer is a patrol officer.
Chief Berkow, May 2008

Today precincts and patrol have staffing priority and every effort is made to keep them with close to a full complement of officers. Officers doing non-police jobs have been sent back to do what they were trained to do – police.

> Enter police headquarters in Savannah, and chances are you'll be greeted by a civilian. That's because the officers are out on the streets.

> Seven more veteran officers last week left their desk jobs at Savannah-Chatham Metropolitan Police Department headquarters and returned to the patrol division.

> It's part of the chief's restructuring plan centered around beefing up the six precincts. Officers from the front desk, quartermaster and communications center have been replaced by civilian employees.

> "We needed to get them out in the field," said SCMPD Chief Michael Berkow.
> http://savannahnow.com/node/279425#

The chain of command has been "flattened" with several management levels being eliminated, (star corporal and corporal), and the number of majors has been reduced by three. The savings translate into more patrol officers. The result -- more "teeth to tail", more policing.

The numbers of special unit officers have been reduced to keep patrol fully staffed and expand patrol's capabilities. The emphasis on patrol is made clear to new recruits. After finishing the academy and their additional training with the SCMPD, they begin with a month of walking a beat; an opportunity to work on real world communication skills and learn about our neighborhoods.

> "The patrol force doesn't feel like the stepchild of the department anymore," police spokesman Sgt. Mike Wilson said. "Our troops from the bottom up are more motivated now than in years past." http://savannahnow.com/node/293807#

Most importantly the capabilities of patrol officers have been expanded and they have been made an integral part of the team. They are now "plugged in" via lap top computers with the information needed to be proactive. Their knowledge is sought out, and, via SARIC, shared department wide. (See technology below.) They are now a critical part of the "team", not the departments orphan left to chase 911 calls -- a big improvement.

5. Better technology:

It's only a slight exaggeration to describe the old management of officers as "don't think, just wait until we tell you what to do." Officers were given minimal information and even less latitude to use their discretion to tackle problems.   Operating in the dark, they could do little. Their main source of information was what they wrote down in their notebooks at briefings and via their radios – often a slow and tortuous process. Police reports were done by hand, or by waiting to use one of the few precinct computers. Either way resulted in a paper report that was reviewed, corrected and then sent to data entry to be scanned into the system. This was a slow, expensive and time consuming process that resulted in information that was not very useful for those who need it.

The subcommittee recommended that the department investigate providing officers with Laptops and handheld communications devices. Both recommendations have been adopted. Senior managers have Blackberries to keep them current with what is going on department wide. Secure WiFi enabled laptop computers are now in use by patrol officers.

Crime databases are now accessed via laptops for tag or warrant checks. Previously officers had to call in license numbers or a name via their radio. If dispatch was busy it could take a long while to respond. This wasted both a citizen's and officer's time as all had to sit and wait for a response. Worse, lots of potentially important checks did not get done as officers just did not have the time.

Today officers independently access data bases directly. On a recent ride along the officer was continually using his laptop to do checks, and verify information. This also has a direct benefit for citizens. A driver who was pulled over had their information quickly verified and was quickly able to go on her way. For all concerned, no downtime waiting for dispatch to get back.

Police reports are now entered into the laptop and then electronically transmitted to the supervisor for review. Turnaround time is much faster. Better, the result is a more useful report. As the entire report is electronic, it is now much more searchable, a benefit to both investigators and prosecutors. As paper reports are phased out, there is much less need for clerks to enter paper reports. In addition to being better, electronic police reports will also cost us less.

Technology in of its self will not result in better policing. What matters is how it's used. Today it's being aggressively used to push information down the chain of command so all officers can both access a wide range of real time information with their laptop, and as importantly, can input what they know, thereby making officers department wide part of a "smart network".

The best example is the in house developed SARIC system, (Savannah Area Regional Intelligence Center.) This is a computer data base that tracks what the entire department is working on in real time. Information is now shared across specialties -- homicide information is available to property crime investigators, property crime information is available to patrol officers etc. This permits the various units to both help other ongoing operations and to coordinate operations across units and specialties.

SARIC is central to the department's efforts to shift focus from reacting to crime as it happens to proactively fighting crime. By pushing information out to all officers, everyone now has the information needed to combat crime. Enabling all officers to add their knowledge to the system, information is kept current, and as important, officers now understand they are an important part of a bigger crime suppression team. This creates a networked force of "smart" officers.

6. Improve city and county services support of the police:

Our report recommended that outside agencies that the police work with to solve problems also attend Compstat so that they better understand the challenges facing the SCMPD and would be more available to assist. City and County agencies, for the most part, still do not attend Compstat meeting.

However there has been considerable improvement in cooperation and coordination. The SCMPD and property maintenance have been working much more closely to deal with abandoned and neglected buildings that may contribute to crime and public safety problems.

In the past there was ineffective coordination between the agencies that make up code enforcement, Fire, Revenue and the SCMPD. To be most effective all three must be together, and be together when problems occur. With bars that means after normal business hours. That used to be a problem.

Today they are doing a better job working together in the evenings when bars and other establishments may be operating in violation of their permits. The result has been an improved ability to address problems surrounding bars.

Two areas where there could be further improvement are the coordination between the Board of Education police with SCMPD and how the County and SCMPD handle drug crime. (See More to Do below.)

7. Pass ordinances needed to improve public safety:

We suggested four areas where legislation could be considered that would assist our police reduce problems. Three of the suggestions have been largely accomplished, teen club laws, under aged kids in bars and improving the process to review liquor licenses in response to complaints.

We also questioned the permitting of "to-go" cups in some areas of the city, but not in others. Our suggestion was to uniformly prohibit "to-go" cups. This has not been done, and we see little support for such legislation.

8. Provide a mechanism to review progress:

The Mayor and the Police Chief were in agreement that a review was appropriate. This is the result. The fact the Chief invited us in to review the department also speaks volumes about the increased transparency of the SCMPD.

More to do:

In just under 3 years the SCMPD has been radically re-organized and is in the process of being revitalized. All of the changes discussed here are new, and many are still in the process of being implemented and improved upon. It will take time for their full impact to be felt where it matters, in public safety. However there can be no doubt we are moving in the right direction.

There are hints the changes are beginning to improve our safety. Violent crime has fallen by roughly 10 percent in the past two years. However property crime has essentially been flat. When thinking about these crime numbers, we need to keep in mind that the SCMPD is not the only institution charged with crime fighting in the county. (See drug unit below.)

As our department gains experience operating in a more accountable manor and Compstat is used to relentlessly ensure accountability and improve operations we hope to see further gains in safety. However it's clear there is more work to be done to build on the success to date.

Following are our suggestions to continue this progress. Suggestions are along two lines; a) those that are under the SCMPD's control, and b) those that involve organizational and political issues beyond the department's control.

Issues under SCMPD control:

Staffing:
In our original report we noted;

> "Our suggestions do not include expanding the budget or increasing the number of authorized officers. Rather, our focus is on ways to more effectively deploy the currently allocated resources and make sure the department deploys all the officers is has already been allocated."

At that time it was clear that the department was not effectively using the officers it did have and, further, it had over 60 unfilled authorized officer positions available.

Today things are very different – the department is "staffed up" and is doing its utmost to make sure that the roughly 573 officers it controls are correctly deployed, (this excludes the 30 SCMPD officers on loan to Counter Narcotics Team run by the county.)

> "I define a lack of cops by what I can't do."
> - Chief Berkow September 2009

On a per capita or per area basis, the SCMPD has fewer officers than similar metropolitan departments. It would be appropriate to consider expanding the force. (This should only be considered after the selection of a new chief. See succession below.) Capabilities that additional officers could add:

- Officers still don't spend enough time proactively policing, they still spend too much time reacting to problems. Our patrol officers are able to spend roughly a quarter of their time working to prevent crime from happening. Ideally they would have twice as much "free time" to be to spend on crime prevention.
- The SCMPD does not have a warrant squad. It would be beneficial to have officers dedicated to getting wanted criminals off our streets.
- Youth crime is a huge problem. Ideally they would have more officers in the precincts specializing in juvenile issues.
- Illegal drugs are the "center of gravity" for crime in Chatham County. The SCMPD does not have a drug unit. This is unheard of for a metropolitan police force. (See below.)
- Improve precincts ability to get ahead of criminals by conducting investigations and surveillance -- permitting them to make arrest before criminals act. One way would be to expanding the capability of TRAP to assist our precincts.

Consideration should be given to expanding the SCMPD by perhaps 6% or 36 officers. If the force is expanded, the City and County should monitor the extent to which additional officers affect our safety. Further additions to the department should be dependent on the ability of this increase to show tangible results.

Issues beyond the control of SCMPD:

Succession:
By far the most significant issue currently facing the SCMPD is succession. Chief Berkow's tenure as Chief will end October 10th, 2009. He will have been with us for just under 3 years. In this short time he has demonstrated the vital importance of leadership. Having the right Chief is the reason our police force was able to so radically reorganize and reform. Leadership matters.

Our community demands a new Chief with a deep understanding of the full capabilities of a Compstat based police department and with the ability to build upon and expand on the change initiated by Chief Berkow. It is clear he has set our department on the right path. We need someone who can continue on this road of improvement and accountability.

Drug unit:
Drugs are the center of gravity for crime in the City and Chatham County – triggering a long list of associated offenses; prostitution, rape, robbery, assaults, murder, car theft, the list goes on…   The illegal drug trade does not operate in isolation. However our drug unit does.

Today the SCMPD relies on the CNT, (Counter Narcotics Team), run by Chatham County for its major counter narcotic efforts. This is a standalone organization separate from the SCMPD. SCMPD provides the bulk of the men, (other regional police departments also provide officers), but does not lead CNT. The CNT was formed prior to the city-county merger when a regional drug effort was lacking. However the drug unit has not been part of the merger. Operationally this makes little sense. (The politics surrounding this issue are beyond our capacity to analyze.)

SCMPD officers, tactics and the allocation of resources are now continually evaluated via Compstat. There is one glaring exception; the CNT. The result -- much of the effort to combat illegal drugs is not well coordinated with the SCMPD, and more importantly, it's not subject to rigorous evaluation and accountability for concrete results that being a part of SCMPD and Compstat would allow.

CNT is a necessary and valuable part of area crime fighting. We need a regional effort that includes all the nearby police departments. However operationally it would be more efficient if CNT was under the SCMPD, a department with the infrastructure to best provide support, (forensics, intel, property room, SWAT, administration, training), and evaluation.

This division of responsibility between the SCMPD and the county means no one is absolutely accountable for drug crime, which ultimately means all crime. Who benefits? Criminals. We are unaware of any police department in the U.S. with this bifurcation of responsibility.

Ideally CNT would be under the command of the SCMPD. The county would have their say over policing, not by running a subset of our police effort, but via access directly to the chief of the County-City police department. In return, the police Chief could then be held absolutely accountable for all crime by both the County and the City. Citizens would then know where the "buck stopped".

Juvenile crime:
Another serious and growing issue confronting SCMPD is juvenile crime. Not only is the amount of juvenile crime increasing, the level of violence associated with juveniles has jumped as well. Young criminals are apprenticing for a life of crime, a life that's bad for them and bad for our community. It's critical we get ahead of, and reverse, this trend.

The Board of Education maintains its own police force that by their presence in our schools has a very valuable piece needed to solve our juvenile puzzle. They do not regularly attend Compstat meeting and are not fully taking advantage of, or contributing to SARIC. Significantly improving the coordination between these two departments would allow both forces to expand their capabilities and effectiveness. Our kids, schools and community would benefit.

Conclusion:
The police committee has been amazed at the extent to which many of our concerns have been addressed and the degree to which real change for the better has been implemented. The most significant improvement has been one of attitude. The old leadership was of a view that there was little more that they could do to combat crime -- the SCMPD was about as good as it could be.

The New Chief brought with him the attitude that we can always do better – the idea of always seeking improvement. We hope that all concerned will continue this culture of persistent improvement. Our safety depends on it.